

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
30 June 2005 (30.06.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/059156 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: C12Q 1/68, C12N 15/11

(21) International Application Number: PCT/FI2004/000776

(22) International Filing Date: 17 December 2004 (17.12.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data: 20031867 19 December 2003 (19.12.2003) FI

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declaration under Rule 4.17:
— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only

Published:
— with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report: 9 September 2005

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 2005/059156 A3

(54) Title: NUCLEIC ACID PROBES AND BROAD-RANGE PRIMERS FROM REGIONS IN DNA DIRECTED RNA POLYMERASE SUBUNIT B GENES, AND METHODS IN WHICH THEY ARE USED

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to nucleic acid probes and to broad-range primers that are useful in the identification of bacterial species and the diagnosis of bacterial infections. Especially, the invention relates to specific nucleic acid probes that originate from hyper-variable regions situated near the conserved sequences of the gene for RNA polymerase beta subunit, *rpoB* (DNA directed RNA polymerase subunit B) of infection-causing bacteria. The invention also relates to broad-range primers originating from the conserved regions of *rpoB* genes. In addition, the invention relates to the use of these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers in the diagnosis of bacterial infections as well as to diagnostic methods in which these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers are used.